



## Tip leads to capture of suspect on county's top 10

**After a nine-month search, the 33-year-old felon was caught in Daytona Beach. He's now in the Volusia County Jail.**

By DUANE BOURNE, Times Staff Writer

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One of Hernando County's top 10 fugitives was arrested in Daytona Beach on Tuesday night ending a nine-month search.

Tommy Lee, 33, whose last known address was on Shady Oaks Circle in Brooksville, was captured about 8:30 p.m. Tuesday after a tip led to him in the Daytona Beach area.

Agents from the U.S. Marshals Service, officers from Hernando and Volusia sheriff's offices, and the Daytona Beach Police Department tracked him down at an apartment complex on Jimmy Ann Drive in Daytona Beach, where they noticed Lee and several others hopping into a car.

To prevent the car from taking off, Volusia County sheriff's deputies laid tire-puncturing stop sticks in the parking lot, but Lee fled into some woods, according to a statement released by the U.S. Marshals' Orlando office.

Last week, investigators had been inches away from capturing Lee, when he ran across Interstate 4 and escaped, said Dan Winfield of the U.S. Marshals Service.

This time, Lee did not get far. A Volusia deputy and his canine partner, Irk, found him. As Lee struggled with the deputy, he struck Irk several times and was bitten, officials said.

After his arrest, Lee was taken to Halifax Medical Center, Daytona Beach, for to be treated for the dog bites. He was released Wednesday and booked at the Volusia County Jail.

Lee was charged with resisting arrest with violence and faces a number of outstanding warrants in Hernando County, including aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer with a firearm, fleeing and eluding, cocaine and marijuana possession and aggravated stalking.

With Lee's capture, the tipster will likely get a \$5,000 reward offered by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement under its THUGS initiative, which stands for Taking Hoodlums Using Guns Seriously. Lee, a native of south Brooksville, frequented his old neighborhood surreptitiously, and sometimes openly, the Hernando County sheriff's spokeswoman Deputy Donna Black said.

In November, Deputy Kenneth Keeney saw Lee riding in a car with Audrey Williams near Interstate 75 and State Road 50. When Keeney tried to stop the pair, the car sped off. A sheriff's spokesman said that as Keeney pursued the car, he saw Lee pointing what appeared to be a gun out the window. The deputy could

not say with certainty that any shots were fired, the spokesman said at the time. The deputy continued following the car south into Pasco County before losing sight of it. Williams was later arrested in Sumter County.

Shortly afterward, Lee began making threats, saying that he was going to do whatever was necessary to avoid capture, Black said.

Law officials think that Lee might gotten help while he was on the run. But, they said many residents in the predominantly black south Brooksville neighborhood lived in fear of him.

"We are very relieved that a very dangerous felon has been taken off the streets," Black said, "and we are thankful that no law enforcement officers were killed or injured during the course of his capture. That was our fear."

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